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BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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A HISTORY OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART WITH A CHAPTER ON THE EARLY INSTITUTIONS OF ART IN NEW YORK. By Winifred E. Howe.
ART MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS. Four lectures, by G. Stanley Hall, Kenyon Cox, Stockton Axson, and Oliver S. Tonks.

THE CATALOGUE OF BRONZES

THE public in New York has long since recognized the steady progress at the Museum during recent years in making its rich collections attractive and available to the general visitor. It would indeed be a careless observer who did not note the effective arrangement, to cite but a few

examples, of the Egyptian rooms and the splendid collection of armor, the immense improvement in the display of paintings, or who could forget the extraordinary series of special exhibitions of rich collections, partly lent, which have given evidence of eager desire on the part of the authorities of the Museum to spare no pains in their efforts to make the institution a powerful and cultivating influence in the life of the city.

There is, however, another side to the functions of a great museum less obvious, no doubt, to the general public, but nevertheless vastly important, since it concerns the position in scientific achievement the institution shall take, and hence the reputation it shall have in the world of scholarship and learning. No hard and fast line between the popular and scientific sides of museum activities can of course be drawn, but it may safely be maintained that the standards of the former line of work will deteriorate, if the latter is forgotten. And this latter class of work sometimes means expenditure of money where the return is not immediate and often not obvious, so that foresight and good judgment, and perhaps faith and imagination as well, are needed on the part of the responsible authorities, if this vital element in the situation is not to be forgotten.

The Trustees of the Museum are surely to be congratulated on the wisdom they are showing in publishing catalogues of high scientific value, for these are perhaps the most important means by which the treasures of a museum can be made known to workers in other museums and to scholars in foreign lands. Such publications are important links in the chain which binds together the scholarly activity of the world. To be good they must of necessity be rather costly, and the pecuniary return from sale cannot be at all commensurate with the outlay, nor do they preclude the necessity of the publication of cheaper and more popular handbooks for the general public, but it is none the less the mark of a well-managed museum to publish such catalogues. The two specimens of such scientific activity which have recently appeared—Professor Myres's extremely able volume

on the Cypriote antiquities¹ and Miss Richter's fine publication of the collection of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman bronzes² afford welcome evidence of the high standards in such matters which it is the purpose of the Museum to maintain. This is hardly the place for a detailed review of the latter volume, but a few comments on the general features of the book and on its great utility will not be amiss.

The author begins her work with a preface on the history of the present collection of bronzes, and an admirable introduction on the technique and archaeology of the subject, including a selected bibliography and most useful bibliographical notes. Much progress has been made in this field in recent years, and this is here summed up with lucidity and brevity. To some persons the generalizations on the qualities of Greek art (page XIV) may seem rather wide, but they are fairly defensible. Of the book proper 174 pages are given to a chronological arrangement of the objects (statues, statuettes, and reliefs, including some vase handles) from the archaic period to the third century A. D., the material in the Roman period, i. e., from the end of the first century B. C. being arranged by subjects. The rest of the volume (290 pages) catalogues implements and utensils arranged in accordance with their purpose. Here the sequence within the groups is so far as possible chronological, and a specific

assignment to a given period is commonly made in the case of each object. The whole scheme is sensible and practical, and it is easy to find any object one is seeking.

The large number of illustrations, about 700, is a feature of the book which will markedly enhance its utility to persons who are out of reach of the collection, and many scholars will be grateful to the authorities of the Museum for their generosity in this respect. Altogether admirable is the simplicity of statement and freedom from uncertain theorizing which characterize the discussions of the catalogue, also the reasonable and moderate point of view in distinguishing the sometimes controversial differences between Greek and Etruscan and Greek and Roman bronzes. It is, for example, a very welcome thing to have from the Museum so clear and discriminating a statement in regard to the now famous Etruscan Chariot (No. 40), or the excellent analysis of the reasons for considering the archaic statuette of a girl (No. 56) Etruscan rather than Greek. Greatly to be commended, too, is the admirable tone of restraint in the description of objects of especially fine quality, like the statuette of Hermarchos (No. 120), or the grotesque figure of a *Mimus* (No. 127), that of the Eros (No. 131), the fine portrait head (No. 330), and the superb and beautifully illustrated portrait of a boy (No. 333)—real treasures all of them, which alone would lend distinction to any collection.

The thanks of scholars are certainly due the Museum and the author for so admirable a publication.

J. R. WHEELER.

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¹Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus, by John L. Myres, Wykeham Professor of Ancient History in the University of Oxford.

²Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Bronzes, by Gisela M. A. Richter, Litt. D., Assistant Curator in the Department of Classical Art.